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DE RUEHEG #2351/01 3561508
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 221508Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4525
INFO RUEABND/DEA WASHDC

UNCLAS CAIRO 002351

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ELA, INR-LYLE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [ECON](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: Egypt's 2009-2010 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INSCR) PART I

REF: STATE 97309

Per REFTEL, the 2009-2010 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report for Egypt, Part 1, follows below:

II. SUMMARY

The Arab Republic of Egypt is not a major producer, supplier, or consumer of narcotics or precursor chemicals. Heroin and cannabis are transported through Egypt, but presumed levels have not risen in recent years. The Anti-Narcotics General Administration (ANGA) oversees most of the counternarcotics operations in Egypt. The ANGA is considered a competent and progressive organization, and cooperates fully with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) office in Cairo. In the past, DEA and ANGA have worked together to uncover and destroy narcotic laboratories, as well as identify millions of dollars of drug related proceeds. Egypt is a party to several international treaties and agreements regarding narcotics trafficking.

II. STATUS OF COUNTRY

Egypt is not a significant producer or consumer of narcotics or precursor chemicals, despite the fact that opium poppy and cannabis plants are grown in Egypt. The substances that are most commonly abused are cannabis derivatives, which are commonly known in Egypt as "bango," and legitimate pharmaceuticals. However, Egypt is considered a transit point for transnational shipments of narcotics from Africa to Europe. Egypt's long and mostly uninhabited borders with Libya and Sudan, combined with the high level of trade shipping passing through the Suez Canal Zone, make Egypt prone to the transshipment of Afghan heroin and narcotics from countries such as Morocco. Other types of narcotics periodically pass through Cairo International Airport. The narcotics primarily are destined for Western Europe, with only small amounts headed to the United States. Trafficking has diminished considerably in recent years due to the elevation of security measures in Egypt at the airports, borders, and ports, and the region as a whole.

The ANGA is the oldest counternarcotics unit in the Arab world. In Egypt, the ANGA has jurisdiction over all criminal matters pertaining to narcotics and maintains offices in all major Egyptian cities and ports of entry. Despite limited resources, ANGA continually strives to improve its capabilities. Over the past two years, ANGA successfully shifted resources, based on drug trafficking trends, from eastern border areas in the Sinai to the western border area with Libya. Additionally, ANGA increased their manpower by 8% during the past two years and updated their equipment to include vehicles and communication equipment capable of operating in the western border area, which is mainly a desert region. Furthermore, ANGA has initiated coordination efforts with the Egyptian Special Forces and Frontier Guards during operations in the western border areas.

III. COUNTRY ACTION AGAINST DRUGS POLICY INITIATIVES

The Government of Egypt (GOE) continues to aggressively pursue a

comprehensive drug control strategy that was developed in 1998. ANGA, as the primary Egyptian drug enforcement agency, coordinates with the Egyptian Ministry of Interior (MOI), the Coast Guard, the Customs Service, and select military units on all aspects of drug law enforcement. Government and private sector demand reduction efforts exist, but are hampered by financial constraints and logistical challenges.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS. Internal security and combating terrorism are the major foci of Egyptian law enforcement efforts. Despite these priorities, ANGA is able to operate an effective program against narcotics trafficking that primarily focuses on narcotics transiting Egypt rather than narcotics grown locally. ANGA investigates and targets significant drug traffickers, intercepts narcotics shipments via land and sea, and detects and eradicates illegal local crops. Large-scale seizures and arrests are rare, primarily because Egypt does not have a significant narcotics market or narcotics abuse culture. ANGA operates its own drug awareness campaign in addition to other government and private sector demand reduction programs. ANGA's Eradication Unit conducts monthly operations against cannabis and opium crops in the Sinai, the primary domestic region for growing these products in Egypt.

According to the GOE, drug seizures in recent years have included cannabis, hashish, and smaller amounts of heroin, opium, psychotropic drugs, and cocaine. Significant amounts of prescription and "designer" drugs such as Ecstasy, amphetamines, and codeine were also seized. With the passage of the first anti-money laundering law in 2002, which criminalized the laundering of proceeds derived from trafficking in narcotics and numerous other crimes, seizures of currency in drug-related cases have increased significantly over the past several years.

CORRUPTION. As a matter of government policy, the GOE does not encourage or facilitate illicit production or distribution of narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances, or the laundering of proceeds from illegal transactions. The GOE has strict laws and harsh penalties for government officials convicted of involvement in narcotics trafficking or related activities. In the last few years, a limited number of local low-level police officials involved in narcotics-related activity or corruption were identified and arrested.

AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES. Egypt is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1961 UN Single Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol. Egypt is a party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols on migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons and the UN Corruption Convention. Egypt and the United States cooperate in law enforcement matters under a 1998 MLAT and an 1874 extradition treaty. The 1988 UN Drug Convention, coupled with the 1874 extradition agreement with the former Ottoman Empire, provides the United States and Egypt with a basis to seek extradition of narcotics traffickers.

CULTIVATION AND PRODUCTION. Cannabis is grown year round in the northern and southern Sinai and in Upper Egypt, while opium poppy is grown in the southern Sinai only from November through March. Rugged terrain means that plots of illegal crops are small and irregularly shaped. ANGA combats this production by using aerial observation and confidential informants to identify illegal plots. Once the crops are located, ANGA conducts daylight eradication operations that consist of cutting and burning the plants. ANGA has yet to implement a planned herbicide eradication program. No heroin processing laboratories were discovered in Egypt within the last 15 years and no evidence is available indicating that opiates or cannabis grown in Egypt reach the United States in sufficient quantities to have a significant impact. Furthermore, Egypt has had success in uncovering and eliminating narcotics laboratories before they reached significant production capabilities.

DOMESTIC PROGRAMS (DEMAND REDUCTION). As of 2009, the National Council for Combating and Treating Addiction continued to be the GOE's focal point for domestic demand reduction programs. The Council falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Family and Population. Previously, the Council was independent from the Ministry and head by the Prime Minister. The Council receives all of its funding from the MOI seizures of drug-related assets.

Therefore, the Council's budget fluctuates from year to year and is dependent upon MOI financial records, which the MOI does not release to the Council. While the Council enjoys high-level leadership, its actual capabilities and influence within Egypt are minimal. The Council primarily funds training for drug addiction workers and drug awareness prevention campaigns, but is not actively involved in rehabilitation programs or harm reduction programs. The Ministry of Communications provides the Council with television time for its awareness campaigns.

The MOH has an annual budget of 150 million Egyptian pounds for the treatment of all mental health diseases, including addiction related conditions. The MOH state hospitals provide free treatment for drug addicts. The MOH flagship state-sponsored drug rehabilitation program is located at the State Airport Hospital in Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt. The MOH also works with foreign entities and companies, such as the Red Cross, to provide training to drug rehabilitation workers in Egypt. The majority of foreign assistance is coordinated through the State Airport Hospital. Neither the Council nor the MOH sponsor harm reduction education programs in Egypt to help reduce the crime rate related to narcotics abuse or provide awareness about the numerous health hazards associated with drug addiction such as the spread of HIV through dirty needles.

Egyptian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are actively involved in demand reduction programs; however, the majority of the NGO funding is used for the training of drug rehabilitation workers instead of the treatment of drug addicts. The Narcotics Anonymous Group was founded in 1987 in Egypt. Within the last four years, the MOH has begun to offer Narcotics Anonymous Group meetings at all government hospitals.

Private Egyptian companies operate halfway houses and drug rehabilitation centers throughout the country, and the number of rehabilitation centers is increasing every year. The GOE does not require licenses for rehabilitation centers, has no governmental standards for these private programs, or government oversight of the rehabilitation centers. While drug treatment at the State Airport Hospital and some private facilities, such as the Behman Hospital, is provided only to individuals volunteering for treatment, the vast majority of drug rehabilitation centers allow for nonconsensual admissions. The majority of the private rehabilitation facilities do not allow the families to have access to the addicts once they enter a program, which can last several weeks to months. Addicts often suffer from both sexual and physical abuse at the private

rehabilitation centers. At this time, the GOE and the Council have no programs to help educate and provide community awareness to the Egyptian population on proper standards and treatment methods for drug addiction in order to help addicts' families select qualified rehabilitation centers and counter the abuses at some of the private companies.

IV. U.S. POLICY INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS

POLICY INITIATIVES/BILATERAL COOPERATION. The current U.S. counternarcotics policy is to engage the GOE through bilateral programs to reduce narcotics transshipments and decrease opium poppy and cannabis cultivation. The policy includes the following specific objectives: increase training to ANGA and other government offices responsible for narcotics enforcement; assist with the identification of illegal crop eradication targets; improve narcotics interdiction methodology; and improve intelligence collection and analysis. Of note, the Department of Homeland Security, through U.S. Customs and Border Protection, has engaged the GOE in customs capacity building efforts with training focused on airport and land border enforcement techniques.

THE ROAD AHEAD. The U.S. continues to work on plans to increase joint operations with ANGA in an effort to move beyond the previously predominant focus on monitoring the narcotics problem only. The GOE is receptive to DEA assistance in narcotics operations and joint investigations around the country. The DEA also is providing training on improving interdiction and eradication techniques, as well as developing additional sources of information on trafficking and production. The counternarcotics cooperation between the U.S. and the GOE is considered an important and beneficial bilateral relationship for the two countries.

Scobey